Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1–13 cancelled

Claim 14 (previously presented): A method for handling a plurality of samples in a multi-channel capillary electrophoresis apparatus comprising:

providing a plurality of samples located on a work surface, with each sample at a respective work surface coordinate, wherein the temperature of the work surface is controlled by a temperature controller;

simultaneously transferring at least two of the samples from their respective work surface coordinates to respective loading wells not located on the work surface, wherein each loading well includes a capillary positioned therein; and

injecting the samples from the loading wells into the capillaries.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of claim 14 wherein each work surface coordinate is defined by a respective sample well.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 14 wherein the loading well is located in a sample loading assembly.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of claim 14 wherein the injecting is performed by electrokinetic injection.

Claim 18 (new): The method of claim 14 further comprising controlling the humidity of the environment surrounding the work surface to reduce sample evaporation.

PAGE 7/15 * RCVD AT 5/2/2005 4:53:49 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-1/3 * DNIS:8729306 * CSID:7033859719 * DURATION (mm-ss):04-22

Claim 19 (new): The method of claim 14 wherein said temperature controller is operative to cool said work surface.

Claim 20 (new): The method of claim 15 wherein each sample well is a well of a conventional multi-well plate comprising 96, 384 or 1536 wells arranged in a rectangular array.

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 14 wherein the capillary is a capillary tube.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 14 wherein the simultaneously transferring is performed by a sample transfer device programmed such that a one-to-one correspondence between a work surface coordinate and a loading well is not required.

Claim 23 (new): The method of claim 14 wherein the simultaneously transferring includes decoupling a spatial arrangement of the work surface coordinates from a spatial arrangement of inlets of the capillaries positioned in the loading wells.

Claim 24 (new): A method for handling a plurality of samples in a multi-channel capillary electrophoresis apparatus comprising:

providing a plurality of samples located on a work surface, with each sample at a respective work surface coordinate, wherein the temperature of the work surface is controlled by a temperature controller;

aspirating at least two of the samples into at least two respective pipettes;

simultaneously transferring the at least two samples from their respective work surface coordinates, in the at least two respective pipettes, to at least two respective loading wells not located on the work surface, wherein each of the at least two loading wells includes a capillary positioned therein, and the simultaneously transferring comprises ejecting the at least two

PAGE 8/15 * RCVD AT 5/2/2005 4:53:49 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-1/3 * DNIS:8729306 * CSID:7033859719 * DURATION (mm-ss):04-22

samples out of the at least two respective pipettes into the at least two respective loading wells; and

injecting the samples from the at least two loading wells into the capillaries.

Claim 25 (new): The method of claim 24 wherein the simultaneously transferring is performed by a sample transfer device programmed such that a one-to-one correspondence between a work surface coordinate and a loading well is not required.

Claim 26 (new): The method of claim 24 wherein the simultaneously transferring includes decoupling a spatial arrangement of the work surface coordinates from a spatial arrangement of inlets of the capillaries positioned in the loading wells.

PAGE 9/15 * RCVD AT 5/2/2005 4:53:49 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-1/3 * DNIS:8729306 * CSID:7033859719 * DURATION (mm-ss):04-22